

Greg's high school football coach, Jim Haskamp, remembers him as a very loyal person, which was evident in all aspects of his life. Greg's favorite past time was football. Haskamp recalls that, "You could chew him out for something, and he'd come back and thank you for trying to make him better."

Sergeant Wagner gave his all for his soldiers and his country. Our Nation owes him a debt of gratitude, and the best way to honor his life is to emulate his commitment to our country. Mr. President, I join with all South Dakotans in expressing my deepest sympathy to the family of Staff Sergeant Greg Wagner. He will be missed, but his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.

FIRST SERGEANT CARLOS N. SAENZ

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, next week, the family, friends, and comrades of 1SG Carlos Saenz will gather to say a final goodbye as he is laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. I pay tribute to his life and legacy.

Carlos Saenz will be buried at Arlington in the company of some of this Nation's greatest fighters, leaders, and explorers—men and women who changed the course of our country. It is completely fitting that Carlos Saenz be laid to rest there because Carlos represents all that is great about America.

Carlos was born in Mexico. He became a naturalized citizen and considered himself extremely lucky and proud to be an American, as we all should. And for more than 25 years, he gave back to this country with every fiber of his being.

Carlos entered active duty in 1978 and was a member of the Nevada National Guard from 1990 to 1992 serving with the 72nd Military Police Company out of Henderson, NV, in Desert Storm and Desert Shield. In June of 1994, he was assigned to the Guard's 1st Squadron, 221st Armor Battalion, Las Vegas, until January 2000. In January 2000, he became an instructor at the 421st Regional Training Institute in Stead, NV. Then, in May 2002, he joined the Guard's 1864th Transportation Company, in Henderson, until he was honorably discharged in January 2004. He then was assigned to the Individual Ready Reserve. He earned the rank of first sergeant in 2001.

Carlos was in Iraq as a trained civil affairs noncommissioned officer assigned to the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, Abilene, TX. He had an extensive military education and had received countless awards for his service. Carlos had also worked for the Nevada Test Site's security firm for more than two decades where they are remembering him as "a patriot, a great American, and a good man."

Nowhere is his loss being felt more than at his home in Las Vegas, where he is being remembered and mourned by his wife, Nanette; his son, Juan; his parents; and brothers and sisters.

I had the opportunity to speak with Nanette Saenz yesterday. I called to

extend my condolences and appreciation on behalf of this country. It shouldn't surprise me, but I am always taken aback by the strength and pride of the families of our fallen heroes. It makes sense that our brave servicemen and women have equally brave support systems at home. Nanette was no exception. As the family made clear in a statement, they "know the legacy he leaves behind while serving in a profession where 'all give some, but some give all.'" Carlos loved being a soldier and loved what he was doing.

We are fortunate that someone like Carlos came to this country. He died as an American—defending his country, fighting for freedom, and working to keep his family and all our families safe and secure. May God keep him close and watch over his family. And may God continue to bless America with people like Carlos and Nanette Saenz.

POLICE CHIEFS SUPPORT COMMON SENSE NATIONAL GUN SAFETY REGULATIONS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, a national study of police chiefs' support for a variety of possible gun safety regulations was recently completed by researchers at Wayne State University, the University of Toledo, and Kent State University. The study, titled "Police Chiefs' Perceptions of the Regulation of Firearms," was published in the April issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. I applaud the researchers for addressing this important issue and for their contribution to the debate about common sense gun safety legislation.

As the study points out, "Firearm injuries are the second leading cause of injury death in the United States, and since 1972 have killed on average more than 30,000 people each year." Our police chiefs see the consequences of gun violence on a daily basis and are in a unique position to evaluate possible solutions to the gun violence epidemic in our country. For their study, researchers surveyed 600 randomly selected police chiefs in cities with populations of more than 25,000 people. This survey was intended to measure the police chiefs' support for a number of possible gun safety regulations. While the responses of the police chiefs may not be surprising to advocates of commonsense gun safety legislation, they are striking and certainly worth noting.

There were a number of potential gun safety regulations that received the support of an overwhelming majority of the police chiefs who returned surveys. Specifically, 93 percent of police chiefs supported a requirement that background checks be completed prior to the purchase of all handguns and 82 percent believed background checks should also be required for the purchase of rifles and shotguns. This means that overwhelmingly police chiefs believe background checks should be required for the purchase of all firearms, regardless of whether they

are purchased from a public or private dealer.

As my colleagues know, current law requires that when an individual buys a firearm from a licensed dealer, a background check must be completed to insure that the purchaser is not prohibited by law from purchasing or possessing a gun. However, this is not the case for some gun purchases. For example, when an individual buys a firearm from a private citizen who is not a licensed gun dealer, there is no Federal requirement that the seller ensure the purchaser is not in a prohibited category. This creates a loophole in the law, making it easy for criminals, terrorists, and other prohibited buyers to evade background checks and buy guns. This loophole creates a gateway to the illegal market because prohibited buyers know they will not be subject to background checks when purchasing a firearm from a private citizen.

One of the factors that automatically disqualifies a person from purchasing a firearm is a prior felony conviction. However, most misdemeanor convictions do not disqualify a person under Federal law from buying a firearm. In response to the survey, a majority of the police chiefs supported a prohibition on the sale of firearms to those who have been convicted of misdemeanor crimes including the public display of a firearm in a threatening manner, domestic violence, and carrying a concealed weapon without a permit.

In addition, the police chiefs supported action on a number of other commonsense gun safety regulations on handguns. More than 81 percent of the police chiefs said that the Federal Government should require handguns to be assigned tamper-resistant serial numbers that could assist law enforcement officials in the prosecution of illegal gun traffickers. Nearly 70 percent of the police chiefs believe that all handguns should be registered, and 82 percent believe that the Federal Government should require all new handguns to be sold with trigger locks.

Our Nation's police chiefs are particularly knowledgeable and well placed to assess the importance of commonsense gun safety laws in protecting the safety of our communities and in stopping the flow of firearms to the illegal market. Through their responses to the survey, the police chiefs are sending a clear message that they believe that stricter national standards on the purchase and possession of firearms should be enacted. Congress should listen to this important message and take action on these issues.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new

categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On March 10, 2006, in Holland, MI, Jason Burns, a student at Hope College, was attacked leaving the campus library. Burns, a well-known gay rights advocate, frequently held lectures on homophobia after his freshman roommate moved out because of Burns' sexuality. While leaving the library a group of students attacked Burns, striking him multiple times and yelling homophobic epithets.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, as chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I am pleased to recognize the accomplishments of the Moscow Helsinki Group, which will mark the 30th anniversary of its founding later this week in the Russian capital. I particularly want to acknowledge the tremendous courage of the men and women who—at great personal risk—established the group to hold the Soviet Government accountable for implementing the human rights commitment Moscow has signed onto in the historic Helsinki Final Act. Today, the Moscow Helsinki Group is the oldest of human rights organizations active in the Russian Federation. Having played a pivotal role in the struggle for human rights during the Soviet period, the group continues to work tirelessly for the cause of human rights, democracy, and rule of law throughout Russia.

When, on behalf of the United States, President Ford signed the Helsinki Accords in August 1975, he was criticized in some circles for supposedly having accepted Soviet control and domination of Eastern Europe in return for what some viewed as worthless promises on human rights. Ultimately, the skeptics were proven wrong. The Helsinki Accords did not legitimize the Soviet conquest of Eastern Europe at the end of World War II. Moreover, by reprinting the entire text of Accords in Pravda, the Soviet Government had publicly pledged to live up to certain human rights standards that were generally accepted in the West but only dreamed of in the Soviet Union and other captive nations. That fact would have huge consequences.

In late April 1976, Dr. Yuri Orlov, a Soviet physicist who had already been repressed for earlier advocacy for

human rights, invited a small group of human rights activists to join in a public group committed to monitoring the implementation of the Helsinki Accords in the USSR. Others responded to this invitation, and on May 12 creation of the Public Group to Assist the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords in the USSR was announced at a Moscow press conference organized by future Noble Peace Prize winner Academician Andrei Sakharov. Among the founding members of the Moscow Helsinki Group, as it became known, were the current chairperson, Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Dr. Elena Bonner, who would endure prolonged persecution with Dr. Sakharov, her husband, and others like cyberneticist Anatoly "Natan" Sharansky. They were joined by seven brave and principled individuals who were ready to sacrifice their comfort, the professional lives, their freedom, and even their lives on behalf of the cause of human rights in their homeland. More would join in subsequent days.

The Moscow Helsinki Group carried out its mission by collecting information and publishing reports on implementation of the accords in various areas of human rights. The 26 documentation provided by the group proved particularly valuable when the signatories convened in Belgrade in 1977 to assess implementation of Helsinki provisions, including human rights.

Naturally, the Soviet Politburo and the Communist Party had no intention of tolerating citizens who actually expected their government to live up to the pledges it had signed in Helsinki. Some members of the Moscow Group were forced to emigrate, many were sentenced to long terms in labor camp, the Soviet "GULag," while others were sent into internal exile far from families and loved ones. In September 1982, under the repressive rule of former KGB chief Yuri Andropov, the Moscow Helsinki Group was forced to suspend its activity. Only three members remained at liberty, and they were constantly harassed by the KGB. Tragically, founding member Anatoly Marchenko died during a hunger strike at Chistopol Prison in December 1986, only a few months before the Gorbachev government began to empty the labor camps of political and religious prisoners.

Between 1982 and 1987, it seemed that the Soviet Government had succeeded in driving the human rights movement abroad, to the labor camps of the GULag, or underground. The reality was that the Helsinki movement had brought to light the deplorable human rights situation in the Soviet Union and put the Kremlin on the defensive before a world increasingly sensitive to the fate of individuals denied their fundamental rights. The efforts by Helsinki activists in the USSR, together with a stiffened resolve of Western governments, helped bring the Cold War to an end and bring down the barriers,

both real and symbolic, that unnaturally divided Europe.

Reestablished in July 1989 by several veteran human rights activists, the Moscow Helsinki Group faces new challenges in Putin's Russia. I have met with Ludmilla Alexeyeva, a founding member who had been exiled to the United States during the Soviet era, who serves as the chairperson today. While Russia has thrown off so much of its Soviet past, the temptation of authoritarianism remains strong. Russia's implementation of Helsinki commitments, particularly those concerning free and fair elections and democratic governance, remain of deep concern to me and my colleagues on the Helsinki Commission.

Ultimately, Mr. President, a strong and prosperous Russia will not be sustained by oil or natural gas revenues but on respect for the dignity of its citizens and the observation of human rights, civil society, and the rule of law. These goals remain at the heart of the Moscow Helsinki Group's ongoing work. I salute the dedicated service of the members of the Moscow Helsinki Group, past and present, and wish them success in their noble endeavors to promote a free and democratic Russia.

CELEBRATING JUNETEENTH

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I rise to mark "Juneteenth," the day in 1865 when General Gordon Granger issued his order proclaiming America's remaining slaves free.

On June 19, 1865, MG Gordon Granger and a group of Union soldiers landed at Galveston, TX. With their landing, they announced that the war had ended and that the slaves were now free. This was more than 2 years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which had little impact in Texas.

Though initially celebrated in Galveston, TX, Juneteenth is now observed nationwide. Americans from all racial and ethnic backgrounds celebrate Juneteenth. And while this day holds a special resonance for descendants of slaves, Juneteenth provides an important opportunity for us all to commemorate a central tenet of our great country: that we are all created equal. This Juneteenth let us all celebrate this milestone in the struggle for liberty by recommitting ourselves to the advancement of justice for all.

The stain of slavery can never be erased from the history of our Nation, and should never be forgotten. In celebrating Juneteenth, we also honor those who suffered under slavery and help to further our understanding of our Nation's history.

One of the most common elements of Juneteenth celebrations is the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," written by James Weldon Johnson. I am happy to provide these lyrics of this great American song:

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,